

EMERGENCY WANDERERS AGAIN LACK FIRE

Casuals Beat Oval Blues

MINUS the unfit Len Worley and with Berks and Bucks captain Paul Bates, who saw a specialist this week about his pulled muscle, and without half backs John Fisher and Charlie Gale, both scheduled to play in representative matches, Wycombe Wanderers were understandably happy to have tomorrow's Isthmian League game with Dulwich Hamlet postponed.

Having seen the emergency forward line, deprived of Worley, Bates and young Steve Hyde, perform at the Oval on Saturday, writes Argus, I can sympathise with Wycombe's initial reluctance to meet Hamlet. The attack was once again depressingly fragile, particularly at inside forward — Corinthian Casuals won 4-2.

Wanderers earned plenty of deserved praise for fighting spirit in this hectic and exciting game. Two goals down after 25 minutes, thanks to the eloquent dribbling of inside-left Robin Trimby, they fought back to 2-2 before half-time, the goals coming from the rival pivots John Fisher and Robertson, who slammed a Les Merrick centre into his own net.

But Wycombe should have won—not lost. Facing the weakest Casuals defence they have met in many a season, Wanderers ought to have scored a packet of goals.

That they failed to do so was certainly not the fault of substitute 17 years old Les Merrick, hauled out of the Wanderers youth team to fill the problem left-wing berth. Merrick had no time for butterflies in his senior soccer debut and this calm, cool youngster scarcely wasted a ball.

One early spell of five successive corners by Merrick, each precisely placed, had Casuals highly embarrassed. Nineteen years old Mick Page, who also made his first senior appearance, at outside-right, saw much less of the ball and frequently ran into trouble when he did receive it.

and when it comes some defence is going to suffer.

Fisher, who tended to be drawn out of position too easily will not count this among his best performances. Trimby raced through a big gap in the Wycombe defence to open the scoring after 15 minutes. Ten minutes later he bagged a second, beating Charlie Gale and Fisher in the process.

Merrick's patient probing led to both the Wycombe goals. After 32 minutes he made an opening for Gale to fire in a bloodthirsty long range drive. Swannell tipped the ball away for a corner and Page's accurate cross was bundled into the net by Fisher. Two minutes later Robertson, to the accompaniment of ironic 'give them a goal' cheers, put through his own goal.

Ragged Casuals offered little threat and Wycombe's sustained persistence looked like meriting a winning goal. With ten minutes to go they still seemed the likely victors.

Then Doug Insole took a hand. A benign bystander until this stage, thanks to the respectful attention of Alistair Lewis, the former England cricketer played a part in right-wing moves which led to two goals in two minutes from David Jacobs and Dick Joyce. On both occasions the ball flashed across the Wycombe goalmouth with the defence opened up.

Dave Thomas and John Beck were the leading lights in a Wycombe rearguard which deserved a better fate.

STRUNG OUT

The Wycombe inside trio moved the ball handsomely enough in midfield but singularly failed to shoot often enough at goalkeeper John Swannell, far from the confident young man who dazzled at Loakes Park.

Georgie Blair trotted miles inspiring Wycombe attacks but with Tony Horseman playing an almost identical game the Wycombe attack was usually strung away from the Casuals goal and far too often the Corinthians dominated their penalty area by sheer force of numbers.

Alas for Peter James, this likeable personality has been rationed for goals for so long now that he wears a haunted look on the field. No player in amateur football so badly needs the incentive of a goal